

From: Paulson, Charis [DPS]
Sent: Monday, April 29, 2013 11:14 AM
To: London, Brian [DPS]; Ponsetto, Steve [DPS]
Cc: Hedlund, Larry [DPS]
Subject: Fwd: Please forward up the chain of command as soon as possible, thanks. I have had e-mail issues here this morning.

Commissioner London / E. D. Ponsetto -
I am sending this email on to you both per SAC Hedlund's request.
Thank you. Chari

Sent from my Verizon Wireless 4G LTE DROID

----- Original Message -----

Subject: Please forward up the chain of command as soon as possible, thanks. I have had e-mail issues here this morning.

From: "Hedlund, Larry [DPS]" <hedlund@dps.state.ia.us>

To: "Paulson, Charis [DPS]" <paulson@dps.state.ia.us>, "Meyers, Gerard [DPS]" <meyers@dps.state.ia.us>

CC:

Commissioner London:

Please accept this as a complaint against myself: SAC Larry Hedlund

On 26 April 2013 at approximately 1400 hours I was traveling westbound on Iowa highway 20 in a State DPS vehicle. I was in the right hand lane of traffic when a black SUV type vehicle went by me on the left at a high rate of speed. I was able to see the license plate as: Iowa Plate 511SOS. I was also able to determine the vehicle was traveling at approximately 90 miles an hour.

I then contacted Cedar Falls State radio communications center and asked the dispatcher to run the above plate. I was informed it was "not on file". I informed the dispatcher of my location and of the situation of a vehicle traveling at a dangerous and high rate of speed.

The dispatcher on duty did an excellent job and was able to contact an Iowa State Trooper who was several miles away. I stayed on the line with the dispatcher and continued to keep him informed as to the location of the suspect vehicle and the approximate speed it was traveling.

The dispatcher was able to keep me informed of the location of the trooper through the MACH system, while I kept him informed of the location of the suspect vehicle by following it and pacing it.

The Trooper was able to get into position in the median and was able to determine the vehicle was then traveling at 84 miles an hour. At times the suspect vehicle's speed fluctuated due to traffic in front of him. I am confident that the suspect vehicle was traveling in excess of 84 miles an hour at times and close to if not over 90 miles an hour.

When the Trooper was able to determine the suspect vehicle's speed he was located a few miles east of the interchange of highway 20 and I-35. As the suspect vehicle and I passed the State Trooper I could see the Trooper turn around and start to follow us. Due to the speed of the suspect vehicle, the Trooper obviously had to travel at an even higher speed to catch up with us from a stationary position.

As we approached the exit to I-35 southbound I noticed that the driver of the suspect vehicle was indicating he was going to exit onto I-35 south. I informed the State Trooper of this through the dispatcher with whom I was still on the line with and also advised the dispatcher that once the stop was made I would stop and assist the Trooper as a backup officer.

As the suspect vehicle, my vehicle and the State Trooper's vehicle all merged onto I-35 southbound I noticed that a school bus traveling south on I-35 was in the close vicinity of us and I took appropriate precautions.

Once the State Trooper caught up with the my state car and it appeared he could see the suspect vehicle I got out of the Trooper's way and into the right hand lane. The Trooper proceeded to close the distance on the suspect vehicle and at first I thought he didn't know which vehicle was the suspect vehicle. It appeared to me he was going to go right past the suspect vehicle as he pulled up on the side of the suspect vehicle. I knew that was not a normal procedure the Iowa State Patrol uses to stop a vehicle.

I wasn't on the line with the dispatcher at this time and soon observed that the Trooper was backing off from the suspect vehicle and pulling to the left shoulder and into the median. A short time after this incident the Trooper and I talked on the phone and he advised me that he was able to determine that the suspect vehicle was the State vehicle used to transport the Governor of Iowa. The Trooper assisting me stated he also recognized the State Trooper driving the suspect vehicle and saw one or more people in the back of the vehicle in suits.

Clearly this incident was an example of a Public Safety issue that demanded to be addressed immediately. I initially attempted to address the issue by initiating a series of actions intended to stop the speeding vehicle and have the State Trooper issue a citation and find out why the plate was not registered.

The State Trooper that assisted me in the initial attempt chose not to stop the suspect vehicle due to one reason, it was occupied by the Governor of the State of Iowa. I completely understand his decision to utilize his discretion. The Governor is the most powerful person in the State and has almost absolute power over many important issues directly impacting the Department of Public Safety.

In addition to the well known dangers of traveling at a high rate of speed, this incident further demonstrates how a situation like this can quickly put others at risk. In this case a school bus possibly full of children. The consequences of three vehicles traveling at high speeds could have been tragic.

It hasn't been that long ago that one State Trooper tragically died while traveling at a high speed.

Traveling at high speeds is one of if not the most common cause for officer deaths.

This incident brings forth a lot of issues that will simply have to be addressed. This Department can't afford to ignore what apparently is a common practice that puts the general public in danger. Regardless of what dignitaries might be in the back seat of the speeding vehicle it is still against the law.

I take full responsibility for the incident being initiated and as such will accept the responsibility of ensuring that the appropriate actions are taken to address this incident.

As the ranking sworn peace officer involved in this incident and as a Supervisor with the Department of Public Safety, I should have insisted that the vehicle be stopped. Even though the suspect vehicle was long gone by the time I found out the actual reason it wasn't stopped, I could have still had actions taken to catch it and stop it and address the dangerous situation. I failed to do that for the exact same reason that the Trooper that assisted me didn't stop the suspect vehicle and for the same reason I suspect the Trooper driving the suspect vehicle was speeding.

No intelligent sworn officer in the Iowa Department of Public Safety is going to risk angering the Governor of the State of Iowa. It is blatantly obvious to me that the Governor was in the vehicle, was aware the vehicle was speeding and was by proxy, the cause of the vehicle to be speeding. The Trooper driving the vehicle is at the mercy of the schedule of the Governor and is told when the Governor is behind the schedule. One of those "read between the lines" communications with potentially very bad ramifications.

I have struggled with how to address this issue since shortly after it occurred. It shouldn't have been a struggle for me and it shouldn't be a struggle for anyone else in our Department either.

Since the speeding vehicle passed through at least two counties I intend to contact the appropriate County Attorney's offices and the Attorney General's office to see how to best proceed with this matter.

I don't believe the Governor of the State of Iowa is above the laws of the State of Iowa. With all due respect, as long as I am a sworn officer with this Department I don't believe anyone has the authority to order me to not do my job and violate the oath I took.

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Hedlund

SAC MCU

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